CATALOGUE

OF

IMPORTANT

Roman Military Antiquities.

A ROMAN STANDARD
OF THE IXTH LEGION,

AND

A ROMAN GENERAL'S CAMP CHAIR

THE PROPERTY OF

ERNEST JOHN SELTMAN, ESQ.

Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of France; Fellow of the Royal Numismatic Society; Member of the American Numismatic Society; &c.

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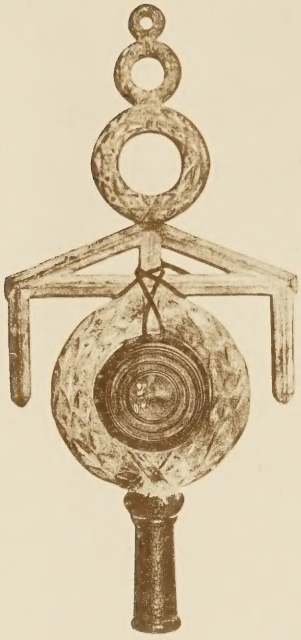

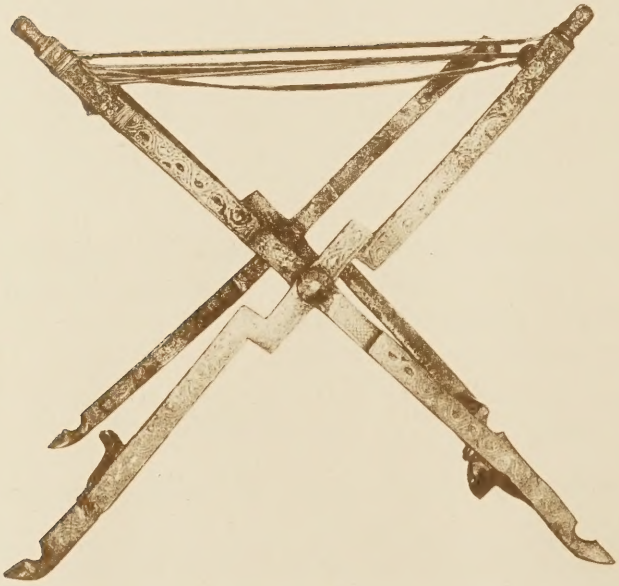

A ROMAN MILITARY STANDARD OF THE IXTH LEGION,

AND

A ROMAN GENERAL'S CAMP CHAIR.

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(Holdsworth

THE Antiquities described below were for a long time in the possession of an English Antiquarian, who made private excavations in Essex in 1827, but their full importance was not realised until they came into the possession of the present owner.

Such venerated insignia as a Standard and a General's Official Chair could only have been lost by the Romans in some important defeat.

Dated, as these objects are, by the portrait of the Emperor Nero in the medallion forming part of the Standard, it seems most probable that they were lost in the sole military disaster which overtook the Romans in that Emperor's reign—the annihilation by Boadicea, Queen of the Iceni, of the IXth Legion, on the way to relieve Colchester, in A.D. 61 (Tacitus Annals XIV, 32). While the Governor Paulinus was leading an expedition against Anglesea, Boadicea roused the Iceni to attack Colchester. After having burnt the city and massacred the inhabitants, the Britons turned

upon Petilius Cerealis, legate of the IXth Legion, who was advancing to relieve Colchester. The Romans were taken by surprise, the cavalry escaped, but the legion was destroyed.

From descriptions and illustrations handed down to us the appearance of such objects, more particularly of a Roman standard, is familiar to many, but, so far as can be determined, only two other fragments of Roman standards have been preserved to the present time :

(1) A silver arm of a standard with tablet, reported to have been offered for sale by auction in London in 1906.

(2) A silver plaque inscribed C.O.H. V, and a disc attached, found near Neuwied on the Rhine. This is given in Schreiber's "Atlas of Classical Antiquities" (Macmillan, 1895) pl. XLII, as being in the collection of Prince Neuwied.

There are no records known of the existence of a Standard or General's Chair other than those described below.

Apart from the perishable wooden shaft and banner, the original standard is complete, and both this and the chair, the official "Sella Castrensis" of a Roman Commander, stand alone as instances of their kind. The extremely fine condition in which they have been preserved further adds to their great value and importance. They may also claim to be the most ancient military trophies of British interest in existence.

"A."—THE STANDARD.

Height 17 in., width 8 in., of yellow bronze ; standing one above the other in the same plane four bronze wreaths of laurel leaves and berries, each wreath so proportioned that it would, if separated, fit into the inner circle of the wreath below ; on each wreath raised ribbon bands, "I" above and "X" below, representing the number of the legion "IX" ; between the third and lowest wreath a triangular pediment of bars (*Plate II, fig. 2*), with pendant bars at each corner of the pediment, suggesting a

shrine for the Imperial effigy within. In the lowest wreath is slung an inlaid medallion in a frame 3·1 in. in diameter (*Plate II, fig.* 6), the weight of the frame being counter-balanced at the back by a thick bronze ring attached to it by three eyelets (*Plate II, figs.* 1 *and* 2). The spots where the eyelets were attached still show on the frame.

The medallion itself is a sestertius of Nero, whose head is turned towards the back of the frame ; legend :—

NERO CLAUDIUS CÆSAR AUG IMP TR POT P.P.

In place of the usual reverse of the sestertius, is the following inlaid design, in technique resembling Mycenæan Damascene work :—The Emperor as Triumphator in a four-horsed triumphal car advancing to right, and holding palm branch and laurel wreath ; the horses in black enamel ; the Emperor's head, palm branch and wreath, the body of the car and the reins in gold ; the wheels and the Emperor's mantle in silver.

Beneath the lowest wreath of the Standard is the socket, drilled with two nail-holes, into which the original wooden shaft once fitted. The iron spike, 10½ in. in length (*Plate II, fig.* 3), for the base of the shaft is triangular in section, and has three bars (two incomplete) projecting at right angles from the upper portion in order to prevent the Standard being sunk too deep in soft ground.

The iron spike corroded ; the Standard perfectly preserved and finely patinated.

"B."—THE GENERAL'S CAMP CHAIR.

Height (folded) 2 ft., dimensions open, 17 in. high, 17 in. wide, and 17 in. deep, of wrought iron, overlaid with silver and an alloy of gold and bronze.

In design the Chair is the precursor of the modern camp stool, the legs of which fold into two pairs, but it has a further improvement in that the horizontal bars are also provided with hinges. The two pairs of legs can therefore fold again, the whole forming into one bundle (*Plate II, fig.* 5).

The original hinge rivets are still in working order.

The four legs are decorated at the top with the heads of bald Sileni, the eyebrows and beards bearing traces of gold inlay, and at the foot with horses' hoofs.

The whole of the three outside surfaces of the iron legs are coated with silver, inlaid with a simple design (*Plate II, fig.* 4) in an alloy of gold and bronze. Leather cross straps have been recently added to represent the original perishable seat.

Complete but for a portion of two of the lateral hinged bars, and, thanks to the coating of silver, in very fine preservation.

*** These Antiquities are published in Daremberg et Saglio, Dict. des Antiquités, vol. IV, p. 1313, fig. 6419 (where the Standard is erroneously described as being in a museum at Brussels); Babelon Traité, 1901, Tome I, p. 669; Bulletin de la Soc. Nat. des Antiquaries de France 1901, pp. 168-169; Revista Italiana di Numismatica, 1912, p. 35 ff.; and in recognition of the importance of his discoveries, the present owner was, in 1901, presented with the silver medal of the Society of Antiquaries of France.

For other ancient records of military Camp Chairs, etc., cf. relief on Arch of Constantine (Rome) and Coins of Caligula, Trajan, L. Verus, etc.

FINIS.

FIG. 6.

FIG. 1.

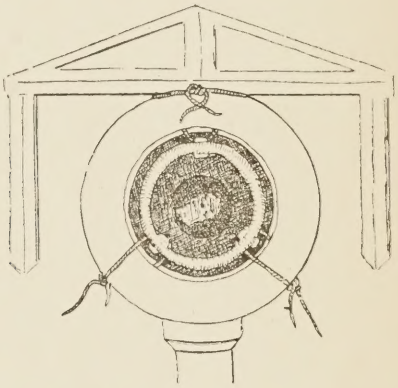


FIG. 2.

FIG. 3.

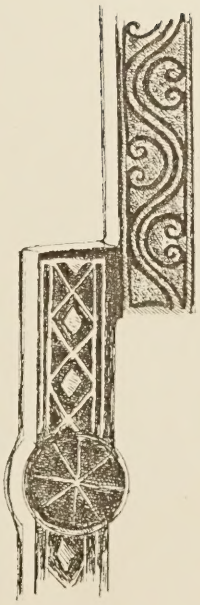
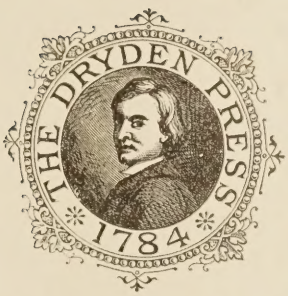


FIG. 4.

FIG. 5.



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